'Mr. Average' On McGovern Vote Trail

A Rolling Meadows resident was on the Public Broadcasting System "I am the People" yesterday to provide his views of a week of traveling with Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern and his staff.

Richard J. Johnson, a life-long Democrat who has indicated he may vote Republican for the first time this year, said he was still undecided about McGovern although his opinion of the candidate improved during the week of travel.

Of the trip Johnson said, "The candidate has to be an extraordinary human being to endure the rigors of this." He also expressed some biases about the news media, though he gained appreciation for their efforts.

"THE THING that really impresses me about the press is the beehive of activity — running to telephones, the typewriters always going, the great footage of film that is never used — that is the kind of thing the average Joe doesn't understand."

The program was part of National Public Affairs Center for Television's year-long project studying the 1972 campaign on a personalized level. Johnson and his family were selected from a dozen families in an ideal middle-class Chicago suburb. They participated in NPACT's earlier report on "The Middle Income Family" produced last February.

Robert MacNeil, NPACT staff correspondent, who spent considerable time making the programs with Johnson, reported that in failing to win over Johnson under the best possible circumstances during the week of travel, McGovern could have serious problems attracting other Democrats who have questions about his campaign.